

Mr. Speaker, the rise and fall of slavery in America, if it teaches us anything, it is that the evil about us eventually and completely collapses upon itself. The time is long past for *Roe v. Wade*, the bloodiest court decision in the history of humanity, to take its place alongside the *Dred Scott* decision in the ash heap of history.

TOURING IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, on February 28 through March 4, just this past weekend, I participated in a bipartisan congressional delegation to Iraq and Afghanistan. I have written about this extensively on my Web blog, which my constituents should know is located at MikePence.house.gov. But I wanted to excerpt portions today by way of reporting back to the House on our findings in these two countries in which American forces face a war every day.

It was a bipartisan congressional delegation, Mr. Speaker, to both Iraq and Afghanistan. In 4 days we took off and landed 20 different times in four different aircraft. We flew to Kuwait in a military jet. We flew into Iraq on a cargo plane. We flew around Iraq and Afghanistan in helicopters and Ospreys. We convoyed in military vehicles throughout both countries. It was a rare opportunity to meet with leaders and locals in both theaters of combat. I am personally grateful to the people of Indiana and our military for making it possible.

Our visit also took place against the backdrop of several major events. The Iraq Government announced that Ali Hassan al-Majid, better known as "Chemical Ali," a brutal military henchman of Saddam Hussein, was to be executed later this month. We arrived in the Kurdish region as that news was breaking and as Turkish forces were announcing their withdrawal for military operations in the north.

And on the second day, our trip to Iraq coincided with the first official visit by a President of Iran to Iraq since 1952. It was a time of great significance for the people of Iraq in several respects.

During our time in Iraq and Afghanistan, one inescapable conclusion emerged. After years of difficulty and setbacks in varying degrees, freedom is making progress in Iraq and Afghanistan. In northern Iraq, known as the Kurdish region, there is security, political process, and economic growth.

And even in central Iraq, after years of insurgent violence, following the military surge, al Qaeda and the insurgency are in steep decline and political progress is beginning to take hold.

As I saw firsthand in Baghdad and in the al Anbar province, the military surge and Sunni cooperation have re-

sulted in extraordinary progress and security. But those gains are fragile. Violence in Iraq has declined by more than 60 percent since the beginning of the surge and has remained at relatively low levels since November of last year. The Iraqi Parliament has passed legislation that makes further political progress possible.

Our visit was, Mr. Speaker, characterized by cautious optimism by American military leaders and ordinary Iraqis on the street.

Afghanistan was also equally encouraging; and with President Hamid Karzai, we saw the determination of a leader devoted to his people and to defeating a resurgent Taliban effort to overturn their progress with terrorist violence this spring.

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In the Kunar province particularly, we convoyed out and witnessed really the greatest threat to the Taliban terrorists who operate on that border with Pakistan, a bridge. A bridge is being built by local Afghanis with American resources. Seeing locals waving at our convoy, greeting laborers at this remote construction site showed me the depth of American generosity and the resilience of this proud people.

My summary on my Web site is simply an effort on my part to report point by point, moment by moment on my trip. We speak about each of the days, from the Kurdish region to our time in Baghdad, to our time in Fallujah and our team even on the streets of Haditha, through Afghanistan and through a stop at Ramstein military base to meet with injured soldiers at Landstuhl Medical Center.

And again, Mr. Speaker, my Web site is mikepence.house.gov. And my constituents could access that by visiting my blog and gaining that information. I would be grateful for any constituent who availed themselves of our writing.

The message that we got from Iraq is clear. The surge is working, but the battle is far from over. Violence is down significantly in the past year. The enemy's abilities have been downgraded in both degree and type of attack. U.S. forces have made measurable progress against terrorist elements in Baghdad and al Anbar province, due to both the military surge and extraordinary expanded cooperation among the civilian population.

And while the military surge is working, the good news is the Iraqi Parliament seems to have gone to work too. The adoption of a budget, the passage of a law permitting Ba'ath party members to work for the government and the plan for provincial elections that may well occur by October of this year represent exactly the kind of progress that many in our diplomatic team and many in this Chamber have hoped to see.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the courtesy, especially at the opening of this time on the House floor.

I would be grateful if any of my constituents went to mikepence.house.gov,

visited our blog and availed themselves of our firsthand account of what we saw in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The progress is real. The progress of freedom is happening. It is fragile. And it is my hope that, by bringing back the information from this bipartisan delegation, that we will be able to find that bipartisan consensus necessary to see freedom win in Afghanistan and Iraq.

THE OFFICIAL TRUTH SQUAD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. PRICE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate so much the opportunity to once again come before the House and address issues of concern, to bring another version of the Official Truth Squad.

The Official Truth Squad started a couple of years ago and was an attempt to, actually grew out of a frustration by many of my colleagues and I who watched what occurred on the floor of the House here and felt that there just wasn't a lot of sunshine going on, bringing light to many of the discussions. And so we launched the Official Truth Squad. The attempt was to try to hopefully bring some commonsense discussion, real-sense discussion to the conversations that go on here in the House on a number of different topics.

One of our favorite quotes is that of the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan who said, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but they're not entitled to their own facts."

And so, Mr. Speaker, what I'd like to do today for a little bit is just to talk about some facts. And one fact that I'd like to present as I begin is that, about a week ago, exactly a week ago, Thursday of last week, a little earlier in the day I took this same well, and I made the comment that at that time it was a specific hour on the clock. Today, as a matter of fact, it's 3:34 p.m. on Thursday afternoon.

Many individuals are just getting completed with a full day's work or about to complete a full day's work. A lot of folks are getting ready for the second shift, getting ready to start their shift from 3 to 11 across this Nation. Some who will be working the midnight shift, the late shift, are probably just putting their head on the pillow so that they can get some sleep before they get back up later this evening to get to work tonight.

And where's the House? Well, Mr. Speaker, if you look around you can tell that the House has gone home. The House has gone home. In fact, we went home today without even passing a bill, without even voting on a bill.

Mr. Speaker, the American people have great concern about the lack of productivity here in the House, and they have specific concern about the